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AUTHOR Graham-Bermann, Sandy; Gest, Scott
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ABSTRACT

The qualities of sibling relationships and friendships of socially accepted and rejected children were compared in a study involving 392 male and 384 female second and third graders. The students completed a series of assessments and their teachers filled out rating scales. Results indicated that sibling status was associated with friendship status. Only children without siblings and boys with sisters were at risk for having no best friend. As expected, friendship status was associated with sociometric status. More popular students were more likely to have reciprocal friendships, while those who were rejected were less likely to have reciprocal friendships. Both sibling and friendship status were associated with positive social behavior. For boys, having a sibling was strongly associated with being nominated by peers for more positive and less negative social roles. For girls, having both siblings and friends was associated with positive social behavior. Having a sibling and type of friendship affected the probability of being perceived in positive social roles by the teacher. Both sibling and friendship status affected the probability of being nominated in positive social roles by peers. (RH)

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SIBLING AND PEER RELATIONS IN SOCIALLY REJECTED, AVERAGE, AND POPULAR CHILDREN

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Sandy Graham-Bermann
Scott Gest

Department of Psychology
University of Michigan

Poster presented at the Society for Research in Child Development Biennial Meeting
Seattle, Washington, April, 1991

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ABSTRACT

The qualities of both sibling relationships and friendships of socially accepted and rejected boys and girls are compared. Results indicate that children with reciprocal friendships are higher in sociometric status than those who have no friends. Girls with siblings are more likely to have reciprocal friendships and only children without siblings are more likely to be without friends. For boys, having a brother is associated with having a reciprocal friendship while boys with sisters are more likely to be without friends. Children's positive social behavior also varies with sibling status and friendship experience. Class leaders are more likely to have best friends and siblings, while only children are overrepresented in the aggressive/disruptive group. Sensitive/isolated behavior is associated with a lack of both sibs and best friends.

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AIMS

Previous research has shown that children who are socially rejected are at risk for psychopathology. The peer and friendship behavior of children in various sociometric status categories has also been explored (Hartup, 1990; Newcomb & Bukowski, 1984). Shantz (1989) and Hartup (1990) suggest that siblings may serve as a developmental bridge between a child's relationships with parents and peers. This project was designed to explore:

1. The relationship between sibling experience and friendship experience.

2. How sibling and friendship experiences relate to adaptive social behavior.

METHOD

Students with parental permission were requested to complete a series of assessments of friendships, sibling relationships, and social behavior. Data was collected in both whole class and small group formats. Teachers filled out rating scales at the same time. Subjects were second and third grade children.

Males N=392 Females N=384

Birth order:	Oldest	N=287	36.9%
	Middle	N=157	20.4%
	Youngest	N=242	31.1%
	Only	N= 89	11.4%

RESULTS

SIBLING STATUS	FRIENDSHIP STATUS	SOCIOMETRIC STATUS
1. With a sibling	1. Reciprocal 27%	1. Popular
		2. Controversial
2. Only child	2. Unilateral 39%	3. Average
		4. Neglected
3. Sex of sibling	3. No best friend 34%	5. Rejected

1. Girls who are only children are twice as likely to have no best friend (Fisher exact p<.04, N=384, 8% versus 16%).

2. Sex of sibling effects the probability of having a strong friendship for boys. Those with brothers more likely to have a reciprocal friendship; boys with sisters have a greater chance of not having a friend (=9.54, df=2,397, p<.001).

3. Friendship status (reciprocal, unilateral, or none) effects the probability of being in a particular sociometric status category. Those with reciprocal friendships are more likely to be generally popular; Those without friends are more likely to be rejected.

GIRLS	N=384	df	F
Sib status		1,379	0.08
Friend status		2,379	3.64*
Sib X friend		2,379	0.01
BOYS	N=392		
Sib status		1,386	1.20
Friend status		2,386	12.38***
Sib X friend		2,386	1.63

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2 X 3 Analysis of variance
*p<.05, ***p<.0001

MEASURES

Friendship Status: Subjects were asked whether they had a best friend in the class and the friend's name. Three categories are:

Reciprocal friendship (two children named each other)
N=216
Unilateral friendship (not reciprocated)
N=307
No best friend
N=267

Sibling Experience: Birth order, family size, sex of sibling

Social Behavior:

Sociometric Status - Sociometric nominations and ratings (Coie, Dodge, & Cappotelli, 1982), were derived from "like most", and "like least" nominations, standardized within sex and class. Classifications are as follows:

Popular	N=124	15.7%
Controversial	N= 43	05.5%
Average	N= 389	49.0%
Neglected	N=115	14.6%
Rejected	N=117	14.8%

The Revised Class Play - A measure of social behavior in which students nominate their peers, by sex, for a variety of social roles. Three principle factors, rotated to varimax criterion, replicate those found by Masten, et al. (1985): Sociability-Leadership, Aggressive-Disruptive, Sensitive-Sad

CONCLUSIONS

1. Sibling status is associated with friendship status. Only children, and boys with sisters, are at risk for having no best friend.

2. As expected, friendship status is associated with sociometric status. Those more popular are more likely to have reciprocal friendships, while those who are rejected are less likely to have reciprocated friendships.

3. Both sibling and friendship status are associated with positive social behavior. For boys, having a sibling is strongly associated with being nominated by peers for more positive and less negative social roles. For girls, having both siblings and friends is associated with positive social behavior.

These are partial results of a larger study which will be presented at ISSBD in Minneapolis, July, 1991.

4. Having a sibling and type of friendship effect the probability of being perceived in positive social roles by the teacher. Both sibling and friendship status effect the probability of being nominated in positive social roles by peers.

Class Play Roles - Teacher rating

	Sociability/Leader		Bossy/Disruptive		Sensitive/Sad	
BOYS	df	F	df	F	df	F
Sib status	1,386	13.57***	1,373	7.20**	1,374	10.37***
Friend status	2,386	0.66	2,373	0.22	1,374	3.99**
Sib X friend	2,386	0.20	2,373	0.08	1,374	0.55
GIRLS						
Sib status	1,386	1.62	1,367	0.37	1,367	0.07
Friend status	2,386	0.07	2,367	0.44	2,367	0.51
Sib X friend	2,386	3.48*	2,367	2.28	2,367	1.46

Class Play Roles - Peer Nominations

	Sociability/Leader		Bossy/Disruptive		Sensitive/Sad	
BOYS	df	F	df	F	df	F
Sib status	1,386	2.34	1,386	5.09*	1,386	3.12
Friend status	2,386	9.20***	2,386	0.98	2,386	2.30
Sib X friend	2,386	0.57	2,386	0.63	2,386	0.34
GIRLS						
Sib status	1,379	5.82*	1,379	9.69**	1,379	0.85
Friend status	2,379	7.95**	2,379	1.23	2,379	1.94
Sib X friend	2,379	2.22	2,379	0.46	2,379	0.58

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001